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Final Address
by

E. Immons, (1871)



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AN
ADDRESS,

DELIVERED THIS MORNING,

On the Western Avenue.

BY WILLIAM EMMONS.

Calculated for the meridian of Boston, but will
answer for the whole State of
Massachusetts.

JULY 4, 1823.

PRICE 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ CENTS.

Printed & Bound 1823

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To the Public, whom I trust will pardon me for calling their attention to the perusal of these imperfect pages when I inform them that I feel proud of being a Bostonian, who, you are all aware, are fond of their liberty and independence.

WILLIAM EMMONS.

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AN ADDRESS.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS :

ASSEMBLED as we are upon this auspicious morn, beneath the canopy of heaven, when we are greeted from the several battlements by the thunder of artillery, proclaiming to all around that another year has rolled away, and yet our Independence is unimpaired ; and we are called to a fresh recollection of the toils and sufferings of our forefathers, and reminds us of the price they paid that we their posterity may this day boast of our Liberty and Independence. A day, which at all times should be the boast of every son and daughter who resides beneath the wings of the Eagle of America—a day when we should not only remember because we enjoy the fruits of the heroism of a Washington, Sullivan, Warren, Knox, Greene, and a host of revolutionary veterans, not omitting the names of Brooks and Eustis—but as oft as this day returns, we should swear to protect the slumbering ashes of those who have fled as we trust, to a more peaceful clime, there to reap the fruits of their toils and sufferings, from the enemies of our coun-

try, and to repel the invader who dares plant his foot upon our happy shores ; and should even kings unite to invade or attempt to pluck a pin-feather from the Eagle of our country, may you at all times remember the shades of the departed heroes of the revolution whose blood was spilt to purchase for you, their posterity, the freedom you this day enjoy, who still hover around the liberties of your country, and seem to speak this language, saying, “ Surrender to no earthly power the liberty you now enjoy, except you first pay the price we paid, and seal it with your blood.”

But should emergency call for your exertions, I would bid you stop, and reflect upon the war of 1812, and remember it is only united exertions that are wanting, even to bid defiance to a war of kings—for have you forgotten the splendor of our arms, even amidst our then state of things. The scene has now changed and men conclude the good of one the good of all, and will no longer oppose the General Government when it shall be expedient to resort to arms to protect our Nation’s Honor and its Independence.

But permit me to address a few words upon the State of Massachusetts—which has a law now in force which in effect destroys the independence of more than half her citizens, and has a direct tendency to crowd her towns with paupers ! and many, very many of her best citizens with despair ! their families with want ! their children to disgrace and beggary !! and often to crime !!! all these calamities, and for what ?—for what ? because A. may owe B. the sum of

five dollars, which sum A. is utterly unable to pay. The government steps in between the parties, and throws the debtor into the inner dungeon, his family into the almshouse; yes, even in this state, where they boast of freedom and independence, and are loud to proclaim to the world that the sons and daughters of Africa shall receive protection beneath our star-spangled banner, and cry aloud in our halls of legislature, that they should receive equal protection beneath the trunk of the Elephant.

Go view this day of our Nation's Jubilee, the prisons of Massachusetts, and see the suffering numbers, who know no other crime but that of being a poor, unfortunate debtor, for which crime he is doomed to drag a lingering, lengthening chain behind, and cannot this day be permitted to hail the air of Liberty and Independence.

Although the constitution declares all men are born free and equal; and I declare publicly to the world, that the Liberty of no man should be taken from him, only when guilty of criminal offence; but our present law declares a man's liberty shall be taken from him if he owes 30 shillings when he has not 30 cents in the world, only what he is dependent on his daily labor to procure bread for a numerous family, for which he is compelled to labor for small wages, in consequence of our wealthy citizens giving employment to the stragglers of Ireland in preference to the sons of America.

As the people of this State have recently decided

by their votes that they disapproved of the Hartford Convention!!!! I firmly believe the rulers of this state will blot from its laws that law which is pregnant with so much calamity to its worthy citizens, remembering that it was oppression which drove our forefathers from the British shores.

I therefore trust the new order of things will revoke every oppressive law, and thereby prevent so many worthy citizens from meeting an untimely grave as their only refuge from oppressive law. As to the late governor's speech and his intentions, I shall pass it by, for by their fruits we shall know them, believing nothing will remain undone which will be for the good of the people. As it is not my intention to wade through the revolution or to depict the sufferings of Washington and the revolutionary soldier, for view them without shoes to their feet, when winter's frost would pierce your hearts when they were struggling for you, that this day you can sit beneath your own vine and fig tree, having none to molest or disturb your enjoyments, except some petty officer of Massachusetts should take you this day and place you within the walls of yonder prison, there to remain until you pay the debt, or in a more particular manner, the fees of service.

But should you doubt of those days of toil, I would refer you to yonder heighths in Dorchester that was then, they sprung up like Jonah's gourd, although they remain to this day. They caused Howe to embark for safety on board his Majesty's ships, and soon he disappeared.

Are you unmindful of a Putnam, although he traversed yonder Bunker's heights, some say armed with a pitch-fork—if so, I have no doubt but he stacked up his share of the British lobsters to dry until this day.

View Charlestown enrapt in flames by the torch of Britons, a nation we should at all times distrust, and be ready to give them a warm reception, or at least, imitate the reception given them on Bunker's heights, or at a more recent date, at New-Orleans by a Jackson. As for Hull, we pass him as unworthy of the writer's notice, believing he should have shared the fate of Arnold.

O, ye mothers of America ! train up your children to love their country, and often repeat to them the story of their Grandsires, and the name of Washington ! who ought ever to be held in remembrance, as your sons must defend your fire-sides in your declining life. Protect your daughters from falling into the hands of the enemies of our country in the hour of danger ; which hour may not be far distant. when the combined armies of proud and haughty kings may approach these American shores in hopes of conquest, and in hopes a British party in America may aid them, if any such party can be found.

O, ye preachers ! exhort your people to the love of liberty that they may be ready to protect your altars and places of worship from being converted into riding-schools—to instruct the enemies' troops in the art of war, as was the case during the revolutionary war, in the Town of Boston.

Fellow Citizens—I have taken up much more of your time than I intended. I must draw to a close by exhorting you to the love of liberty, requesting of you to use all your influence to the repeal of that law, which, in my opinion, genders felons of all descriptions, and sinks the character of your state. Trusting the legislature of this state, at their next session, will not rise without giving us that relief which the importance of the subject requires. As it is no ways probable that I shall have a seat in the House, I exhort those who may be there to do their duty, that it may not be the case upon the return of another anniversary which we this day celebrate. For where is there a father who can enjoy the festivity of this day, knowing his son is within the walls of a prison, and is not permitted to breathe the air of freedom which was the gift of God? Should our departed forefathers of the revolution visit the soil which they purchased at so dear a rate, and behold the distress entailed upon many of those unfortunate children, would they not cry aloud, and say, O Eustis unlock your prison doors before you join our society in the realms of bliss.

WILLIAM EMMONS.

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